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# A PINE SAWFLY OUTBREAK ON THE KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST, MONTANA

by

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A report of pine defoliation on the Fisher River District of the Kootenai National Forest, believed to be caused by pine butterfly, *Neophasia menapia* F. & F., was received in late June 1973. An evaluation of this damage was made June 28 and 29. George Summerside, Forest silviculturist, and Robert Brown, District Ranger, Fisher River District, participated in this evaluation.

Examination of infested sites in the Wolf Creek and East Fork Fisher River drainages revealed that the damage was being caused by pine sawflies, *Neodiprion* sp. Both ponderosa pine, *Pinus ponderosae*, and lodgepole pine, *P. contorta*, were infested. Larvae were mature or nearly mature and had stripped virtually all of the older foliage from host trees leaving only the current year's growth.

According to District personnel, approximately 1,000 acres of seedling and sapling size material is infested on the District and adjoining lands owned by St. Regis Paper Company. Heaviest damage occurs along banks of logging roads where lodgepole and ponderosa pines have seeded in naturally. Extensive ponderosa pine plantations have been established in the area by St. Regis Paper Company; however, these appeared to be unaffected to date. Host trees in excess of 20 feet in height appear to be free from feeding injury.

Positive identification of the sawfly species or species complex involved has not been made. Laboratory rearings which are currently in progress indicate that two species of sawflies might be involved, one a black headed species and a second which develops a light colored head capsule in the final larval instar. Appearance of the larvae seem to fit descriptions given by Tunnock (1960) of two species of

sawflies involved in an outbreak which occurred in the Little Rockies area of the Lewis and Clark National Forest during the period 1959-61. These were identified as *Neodiprion nanulus contortae* and *N. fulviceps* (complex). The Little Rockies outbreak involved overstory lodgepole and ponderosa pines, however, instead of the seedling and sapling size material which is being damaged on the Kootenai National Forest. Attempts are being made to rear larvae to the adult stage and obtain positive identification.

Laboratory rearings will also be used to provide some insight into life histories of the insects involved. Sawflies normally overwinter as either eggs or pupae. If these species overwinter as eggs, plans will be made to conduct egg surveys in October or November to attempt to forecast 1974 damage potential. No control action is recommended at this time because feeding injury by the current generation is nearly completed.

## REFERENCE CITED

Tunnock, A. (Scott), 1960. Evaluation of a sawfly infestation in the Lewis and Clark National Forest, Montana, in June 1960. USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Forest and Range Expt. Sta., Forest Insect Lab., Missoula, MT.